

# Kitchen Garden Risk Assessments

For some schools, performing a risk assessment will be part of starting a new Program or part of their ordinary annual tasks. Even if you're not required to complete a formal risk management plan, it can be a helpful exercise. Some people are not very comfortable with children being in an environment where there are risks and showing them your plan can provide reassurance.

Risk management is a process that involves a number of sequential steps. Here is one common version:

- 🍷 Identify any hazards and the risks associated with those hazards (e.g. what is the impact of a negative outcome?)
- 🍷 Assess the risks (e.g. how likely is a negative outcome?)
- 🍷 Identify what steps you will take to manage the risk
- 🍷 Document the process
- 🍷 Monitor and review the outcomes

This resource provides some basic information that you can adapt to your own school situation and student group.

## Identifying risks in the Kitchen Garden Program

Some of the risks that may be relevant for your school include:

- 🍷 knives
- 🍷 burns from hot water, steam or hot oil
- 🍷 trips or falls in the kitchen or garden
- 🍷 electrical equipment, e.g. blender, food processor
- 🍷 inhalation of harmful substances from garden additives, compost, etc
- 🍷 risk of chemical poisoning in the kitchen or garden
- 🍷 risk of sunburn in garden
- 🍷 risk of allergic reactions in the kitchen or garden
- 🍷 risks of cook top fires
- 🍷 risk of burns from wood fired oven
- 🍷 unsafe manual handling in the kitchen or garden.

## Managing risks in the kitchen and garden

Lots of workplace-related risk materials talk about eliminating risk, but there are some risks in the Kitchen Garden Program, such as using sharp cook's knives, that just can't be eliminated and need to be managed.

Here are some examples of how Kitchen Garden Program schools minimise risk:

- 🍷 Staff delivering kitchen and garden classes receive mandatory SAKGF training including guidance on creating safe working environments in the kitchen and garden.
- 🍷 Procedures are explicitly taught in small groups and then implemented in the kitchen and garden, e.g. children earn knife and tool licences using Foundation materials, safe manual handling, anaphylaxis, sun protection, etc.
- 🍷 Students work in small groups of no more than five under the direct supervision of an adult.
- 🍷 Volunteers and staff are provided with orientation and given explicit instruction in the safe and proper use of equipment.
- 🍷 Foundation recipes and activities include safety notes and specify any action which should be completed by an adult.

- Safe storage of materials, e.g. keep knives in a locked toolbox, keep garden tools and equipment in a locked shed.
- School provides equipment such as gloves, masks, etc as necessary.
- Relevant regulations complied with, e.g. access to adequate First Aid equipment, fire extinguishers/blankets/hot water settings/hand washing facilities.
- Wood fired ovens and fuel are secured so they must be unlocked before use. An adult must be present during the time that a fire burns and must ensure that it is extinguished correctly.

## Tips for your first classes

Involving children in the risk assessment process can be a very productive exercise:

*'Our formal risk assessment has always been conducted by the schools OH&S officer, but I have always begun every school year with a safety class and often follow up with reminders.'*

*The lesson begins with the children being asked to define the words risk and hazard. They are then required to identify hazards in the garden and consider ways to reduce the risk involved (e.g. wearing gloves).*

*This has always been a good way to introduce them to the garden guidelines (e.g. no running reduces the chance of tripping), introduce insects as friends and something to be respected rather than feared (e.g. bees) and the need for care when using tools that are nearly always either heavy or sharp.*

*It may surprise you what the children come up with, some hazards that are very real and may not have been thought of (poisonous plants).'*

When you are starting a conversation about risk management with children, it can be useful to frame it in terms of the school motto or positive behaviour learning principles, e.g. 'How do we show respect (care/responsibility/etc) in the kitchen and the garden?'

## More information

Below are some links to state-based information on risk assessments in schools, intended as a guide only. It's a good idea to discuss your risk management plan with your Principal or other relevant executive staff to make sure that you are aware of all relevant school requirements.

### ACT

[http://bit.ly/DETpoliciesA\\_Z](http://bit.ly/DETpoliciesA_Z)

### Queensland

<http://bit.ly/EQCurriculumActivityRiskAssessment>

<http://bit.ly/EQRiskManagement>

[http://bit.ly/QLD\\_DETE\\_ManagingRisksAtSchool](http://bit.ly/QLD_DETE_ManagingRisksAtSchool)

### NSW

[http://bit.ly/DETguidelines\\_intranetlinks](http://bit.ly/DETguidelines_intranetlinks)

### NT

[http://bit.ly/NTRiskManagementFramework\\_intranetlinks](http://bit.ly/NTRiskManagementFramework_intranetlinks)

### SA

<http://bit.ly/DECDRiskManagement>

### Victoria

<http://bit.ly/DEECDRiskManagement>

### WA

[http://bit.ly/WA\\_DET\\_RiskManagement](http://bit.ly/WA_DET_RiskManagement)

### TAS

<http://bit.ly/EducationTasRiskManagement>